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ABSTRACT

The Texas Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights conducted a public forum and gathered information on the extent to which early childhood education programs have affected equal educational opportunities for minority students in Texas. The hearings were held in response to the failure of public education systems to meet the needs of minority youth and to research the documents discrepancies between minority students and other students in educational outcomes. Summaries of statements of 13 school superintendents and administrators, representatives of the state board of education, educational research experts, directors of parenting and early childhood programs, and other concerned individuals reveal the bleak picture of the status of minorities in Texas public schools. It is noted that dropout rates and achievement levels continue to indicate disparities in educational opportunities. The speakers agree that helping children and their families is a significant imperative in the process of overcoming discrimination and assuring equal educational opportunities. Recommendations included the development of: (1) public policy that is beneficial to families and children in poverty; and (2) strategies that assure that minority children enter into an appropriate, multicultural educational process. (SM)

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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION ISSUES IN TEXAS: IMPLICATIONS FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

TEXAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

PS 020819

This summary report of the Texas Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights was prepared for the information and consideration of the Commission. Statements and viewpoints in the report should not be attributed to the Commission or to the Advisory Committee, but only to individual participants in the community forum where the information was gathered.

A SUMMARY REPORT

APRIL 1990

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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION ISSUES IN TEXAS: IMPLICATIONS FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

TEXAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TO THE UNITED STATES
COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

A SUMMARY REPORT

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THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

The United States Commission on Civil Rights, first created by the Civil Rights Act of 1957, and reestablished by the United States Commission on Civil Rights Act of 1983, is an independent, bipartisan agency of the Federal Government. By the terms of the 1983 act, the Commission is charged with the following duties pertaining to discrimination or denials of the equal protection of the laws based on race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap, or national origin, or in the administration of justice; investigation of individual discriminatory denials of the right to vote; study of legal developments with respect to discrimination or denials of the equal protection of the law; appraisal of the laws and policies of the United States with respect to discrimination or denials of equal protections of the law; maintenance of a national clearinghouse for information respecting discrimination or denials of equal protection of the law; and investigation of patterns or practices or fraud or discrimination in the conduct of Federal elections. The Commission is also required to submit reports to the President and the Congress at such time as the Commission, the Congress, or the President shall deem desireable.

THE STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

An Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights has been established in each of the 50 States and the District of Columbia pursuant to section 105(c) of the Civil Rights Act of 1957 and section 6(c) of the United States Commission on Civil Rights of 1983. The Advisory Committees are made up of responsible persons who serve without compensation. Their functions under their mandate from the Commission are to: advise the Commission of all relevant information concerning their respective States on matters within the jurisdiction of the Commission; advise the Commission on matters of mutual concern in the preparation of reports of the Commission to the President and the Congress; receive reports, suggestions; and recommendations from individuals, public and private organizations, and public officials upon matters pertinent to inquiries conducted by the State Advisory Committee; initiate and forward advice and recommendations to the Commission upon matters in which the Commission shall request the assistance of the State Advisory Committee; and attend, as observers, any open hearing or conference which the Commission may hold within the State.

Early Childhood Education Issues in Texas:

Implications for Civil Rights

Texas Advisory Committee
to the
United States Commission on Civil Rights

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Acknowledgements

The Texas Advisory Committee wishes to thank staff of the Commission's Western Regional Division for its help in the preparation of these proceedings. The project was the principal assignment of John F. Dulles II, with support from Grace Hernandez and Priscilla Lee Herring. The project was carried out under the overall supervision of Philip Montez, Director, Western Regional Division.

UNITED STATES
COMMISSION ON
CIVIL RIGHTS

1121 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

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Wilfredo J. Gonzalez, Staff Director

Attached is a summary report based on a public forum convened by the Texas Advisory Committee on May 20, 1989, in Dallas. The purpose of the forum was to gather information on civil rights impacts of early childhood education programs. Specifically, the Committee was interested in determining the extent to which such programs might affect equal educational opportunities for minorities in Texas.

The Advisory Committee sought a balanced perspective on this subject and invited a cross-section of knowledgeable persons to address the forum. These included school superintendents and administrative personnel, representatives of the state board of education, educational research experts, directors of parenting and early childhood programs, and other concerned individuals. The Committee was also honored to have present at the forum, Commissioners Esther G. Buckley and Sherwin T.S. Chan. Their interest in this significant activity of the Texas Advisory Committee was very much appreciated.

By a vote of 9 to 1, the Advisory Committee approved submission of this report to the Commissioners. The Committee hopes this document will be of value to the Commission and that educational issues receive its close attention. The Committee is convinced that the goal of equal educational opportunities for all, as yet an unredeemed goal, is worthy of our nation's greatest endeavors.

Based on information gathered at the forum, the Advisory Committee is further convinced that improving educational opportunities for minorities depends in large measure on providing appropriate programs and resources in the formative years of a child's development. The Commission may wish to examine this further with additional research and factfinding throughout the country.

Respectfully,

Adolfo P. Canales, Chairperson
Texas Advisory Committee

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I. Introduction and Background

In 1969 the public schools in Texas had an enrollment of about 64 percent white students. In 1987 the schools were 52.5 percent white, 30.9 percent Hispanic, and 14.6 percent black.[1] In the State's largest cities, white students were already in the minority. By 1987 the Dallas Independent School District was 59 percent black and 14 percent Hispanic; the Houston Independent School District was 43 percent black and 24 percent Hispanic; San Antonio Independent School District was nearly 80 percent Hispanic. On a statewide basis, the 1988-89 public schools had a first grade class of 50 percent Hispanic.[2] Minorities represent 35 percent of the State's total population and 46 percent of its youth.[3] It is projected that by 2010, Texas' population will be close to 50 percent minority. By 2000, the minority enrollment in the schools will already exceed 50 percent.[4]

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[1]Dave Denison, "The Rising Tide of Dropouts," Texas Observer, Sept. 30, 1988.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Harold L. Hodgkinson, Texas: The State and its Educational System (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Educational Leadership, 1986) p. 2.

[4]Ibid., p. 3.

According to a report published by the Institute for Educational Leadership, a large number of young persons in Texas are "at risk" before they even begin public school.[5] The report concludes that "it is easier and cheaper to start kids out successfully in the educational system and keep them at grade level than it is to catch up with remedial programs for tenth graders."[6] Unfortunately, Texas ranks 42nd among all the States in the percentage of its youth who graduate from high school. Of the 233,357 ninth graders in Texas in 1980, only 161,580 or 69 percent, graduated from high school in 1984.[7]

According to a recent study by the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) 45 percent of Hispanics and 34 percent of blacks in Texas are not making it from the first year of high school to graduation (compared to 27 percent for whites).[8] In a national study released in 1988, IDRA found that Texas had 497,000 "undereducated youths"

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[5]Ibid., p. 11. The term "at risk" refers to children who are likely to experience difficulty in the public school system because of factors such as poverty, lack of English-speaking ability, physical and emotional handicaps, and parents with a low level of education.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid., p. 3.

[8]Denison, "The Rising Tide of Dropouts," p. 8

- second only to California.[9] The study revealed that of the half million dropouts in the United States 152,000 of them had quit with less than 9 years of schooling.[10]

Other related social statistics are equally disturbing: Texas has the second highest murder rate of any State; it ranks 49th in the provision of welfare for single mothers and 6th in births out of wedlock to women under 20. Out of every 100 births in 1983, 34 were out of wedlock; 77.5 percent of of all blacks born in that year were to unmarried parents.[11] Studies of residential segregation also demonstrate that blacks in Dallas and Houston have a low percentage of home ownership and are concentrated in the inner cities.[12] Recent statistics also reveal that 37 percent of Hispanic children are below the poverty line, compared to 33 percent of black children and 25 percent of white children.[13]

According to Fortune magazine, "in a high-tech age where nations increasingly compete in brainpower, American schools are producing an army of illiterates. Companies that cannot

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[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Hodgkinson, p. 5.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Denison, p. 10.

hire enough skilled workers now realize they must do something to save the public schools. Not to be charitable, not to promote good public relations, but to survive."[14] David Kearns, chairman and chief executive of the Xerox Corporation commented that "the American workforce today is in grave jeopardy. We are running out of qualified people. If current demographic and economic trends continue, American business will have to hire a million new workers a year who can't read, write or count...Teaching new workers basic skills is doing the schools...work for them - and frankly, I resent it."[15] Sixty-four percent of business leaders name education as the number one problem in the country.[16]

Since minorities already represent close to 50 percent of this nation's public school enrollment and their dropout and illiteracy rates hover near 40 percent, there is growing concern about the implications of this failure in our educational system for our economic future. Clearly, the concern extends well beyond the traditional civil rights community.

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[14]Nancy J. Perry, "Saving the Schools: How Business Can Help," Fortune, Nov. 7, 1988.

[15]David T. Kearns, "An Education Recovery Plan for America," Hispanic Engineer, Summer 1988. In a rcent article addressing the failure of our nation's public schools, Mr. Kearns is quoted as stating that "more than a third of tomorrow's work force will be minorities...and more of these kids are growing up poor." He also noted that one-fourth of these "don't come close to having the skills to survive in an advanced economy." (New York Times, Sept. 25, 1989, p. 1).

[16]Kearns, "An Education Recovery Plan for America," p. 36.

A recent article focusing on the failure of our nation's schools to produce qualified workers reports that "many of the students who are most at risk are children from minority groups, the same youngsters who the Labor Department says will fill 56 percent of the new jobs that will open up between 1986 and the year 2000."[17]

The article further cites leaders in government, business and education as concluding that "America is developing into a nation of educational haves and have-nots, who are fast becoming employment haves and have-nots; that this polarization follows racial lines, and that the effect in the economy and the country could be devastating."[18]

Brad M. Butler, former chairman of the Proctor and Gamble Company, is quoted in the article as stating that "if we continue to let children who are born in poverty fail to get the kind of education that will allow them to participate in our economy and our society productively, then some time in the 21st Century this nation will cease to be a peaceful prosperous democracy."[19]

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[17]Edward B. Fiske, "Implementing U.S. Jobs 'Disaster': Work force Unqualified to Work," New York Times, Sept. 25, 1989, p. 1.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid.

The article also notes population statistics and newly compiled research suggesting "that American schools are graduating students who lack even the skills needed to fill existing assembly line jobs, let alone the sophisticated new jobs that increasingly dominate the economy."[20] Corporate America, reports the New York Times, "has seen what the nation's schools are producing and it is alarmed."[21]

According to the Bureau of Justics statistics, 62 percent of the Nation's prison inmates in 1986 were high school dropouts,[22] an increase of 9 percent in 7 years. The median education level has declined from 11 years of schooling in 1979 to 10 years in 1986. Yet, in a recent report, the Hudson Institute forecast that by the 1990s, more than half of all new jobs will require some education beyond high school.[23]

The New York Times reports a dramatic decline in the number of black men in college and suggests that this imbalance will have "broad, harmful consequences for social and race relations...throughout American society."[24] Blacks

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Los Angeles Times, May 29, 1989, p. 33.

[23] Ibid., p. 32.

[24] New York Times, Feb. 5, 1989, p. 1.

make up 11 percent of the Nation's population, but 34 percent of the inmates in Federal and State prisons. And there are nearly half as many black men in prisons as in colleges and universities.[25] Describing the costs for improving education, Fortune magazine points out that taxpayers spend about $4,200 a year to send a child to school while it costs some $14,000 to keep a prisoner in jail. Welfare families cost taxpayers an average of $4,300 a year; dropouts head more than half of them.[26] In September 1988 Fortune convened a conference of business, government, and academic leaders to discuss what business can do to improve education. Among their conclusions: No investment in education offers a higher payback than preschool for poor young people.[27]

A study by the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation in Ypsilanti, Michigan, concluded that 1 year of quality preschool before kindergarten reduces the likelihood that a child will become a dropout by a third.[28] The New York Times report cited above also found that problems of young blacks

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Perry, p. 46.

[27] Ibid., p. 54.

[28] Ibid.

began very early in the educational process and multiplied rapidly.[29] In a report on the education of Hispanics, the National Concil of La Raza recommended that dropout prevention programs be initiated early, otherwise such efforts would only be reaching "the survivors."[30] The report cited the high proportion of Hispanic students who are enrolling 2 or more years below grade level before they reach high school.[31] Current research indicates that only 8.6 percent of Hispanics have completed 4 or more years of college, compared to 20.6 percent of non-Hispanics.[32]

According to Business Week, "the nation's ability to compete is threatened by inadequate investment in our most important resource: people...and as the economy comes to depend more and more on women and minorities, we face a massive job of education and training - starting before kindergarten. Can we afford it? We have no choice."[33] Dr. David Hamburg, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, which has financed many early childhood programs, calls the first years of life the "great leverage point for the

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[29] New York Times, Feb. 5, 1989, p. 1.

[30] Lori S. Orum, The Education of Hispanics: Status and Implications (Washington, D.C.: National Council of La Raza, 1986) p. 49.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Tomas Rivera Center Report, Summer 1989, p. 8.

[33] Business Week, Sept. 19, 1988, p. 118.

human future."[34] Sharon L. Kagan, a researcher at Yale University, has written that "it is far less costly - socially, emotionally and financially - to prevent the onset of problems than to treat them after they become rooted." Getting young children off to a good start, she writes, "is a universally accepted goal."[35] Business Week columnist Alan Binder maintains that a dollar invested in preschool education "saves $4.75 in subsequent spending on special education public assistance, and crime."[36]

In 1965 approximately 5 percent of 3 year-old children and 16 percent of 4 year-olds were enrolled in pre-primary programs. These figures increased to 30 percent and 50 percent, respectively by 1985.[37] Almost half the States already offer public educational programs to at least some 4 year-olds, and these programs are being initiated and expanded at a rapid pace through the country. And, almost 90 percent of all 5 year-olds in the United States were enrolled in a nursery or kindergarten program in 1985.[38]

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[34]New York Times, Jan. 15, 1989.

[35]Ibid.

[36]A.S. Binder, "Improving the Chances of Our Weakest Underdogs - Poor Children." Business Week, Dec. 14, 1987.

[37]Ron Haskins, "The Efficacy of Early Childhood Education," American Psychologist, February 1989, p. 280.

[38]Ibid.

In an article published by the Heritage Foundation, critical of the Head Start program, Enid Borden and Kate Walsh O'Beirne conclude that in order for Head Start to be more successful, emphasis must be focused on helping young children "avoid placement in special education classes were they don't belong...often disadvantaged youngsters are too quickly placed in classes that stigmatize and discourage them."[39] The authors also stress that "Head Start would be more effective with greater parental involvement."[40] In January 1989 President George Bush proposed a 20 percent increase in funding for the Head Start program.[41] Currently, fewer than 20 percent of eligible children are enrolled in the program.[42]

The lack of equal educational opportunities for minorities has been well-documented and yet, as David Kearns, chairman of Xerox has written: "Children in a democratic society all have the same destiny and they deserve the same quality of schooling."[43] Mr. Butler, former chairman of

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[39]Enid Borden and Kate Walsh O'Beirne, "False Start? The Fleeting Gains at Head Start," Policy Review (The Heritage Foundation), Winter 1989, p. 51.

[40]Ibid.

[41]New York Times, Jan. 15, 1989.

[42]Enid Borden and Kate O'Beirne, p. 48.

[43]Kearns, p. 38.

Proctor and Gamble, has stated that many children enter school so far behind that it is almost impossible for them to catch up.[44]

The civil rights implications of inadequate educational preparation are clear in terms of the statistical outcomes outlined above. Another dimension of the problem is evidenced by systemic discrimination operating within our nation's public schools. Carol Phillips, writing in Young Children, discusses institutional racism as a reality that must be addressed in examining our educational systems:

> Institutional racism is a system that gives privilege to one group over others, that takes the characteristics of one group and declares them superior to all others. Its operation is apparent by its consequences rather than its intention. We must explore the stereotypes we have learned that are racist and ethnocentric, and develop strategies for changing what we believe about ourselves and others. Too many of us still unconsciously treat light-skinned children better than dark-skinned ones, and the working mother better than the one on welfare.[45]

The Texas Advisory Commitee voted on March 25, 1988, to conduct a forum addressing issues of access to education for minorities. A special subcommittee was appointed to determine

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[44]Fortune, Nov. 7, 1988, p. 44.

[45]Polly Greenberg, "Ideas that Work With Young Children - Parents as Partners in Young Children's Development and Education," Young Children, May 1989, p. 70.

the specific purpose and focus for the project. The subcommittee, chaired by Dr. Denzer Burke, met in Dallas on November 2, 1988, and recommended a forum that would address early childhood education issues. The members wanted to ascertain the extent to which early childhood intervention programs might affect equal educational opportunities for minorities in Texas. A proposal was developed and sent to the full Advisory Committee for approval.[46] The subcommittee then met again on February 25, 1989, in Dallas to begin specific preparations for the public forum, and to recommend participants.

The Texas Advisory Committee forum was convened in Dallas on Saturday, May 20, 1989. Invited to serve as presentors were State and local educational leaders, early childhood education experts, community based organizations, and other persons knowledgeable about the issues under consideration. The Committee was privileged to have two Commissioners present at the forum; Esther Buckley and Sherwin T.S. Chan both of whom addressed the proceedings.

A complete transcript of the meeting was obtained and the following section of this report to the Commissioners will summarize the presentations of the participants. The final

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[46]The proposal was approved by a vote of nine in favor, one opposed and one abstention (the abstention was later changed to an affirmvative vote). The proposal approved by the Texas Advisory Committee and the Commission's Acting Staff Director in January 1989 is on file at the Commission's Western Regional Division Office in Los Angeles.

section consists of the Advisory Committee's concerns, summary observations and suggestions for additional Commission inquiry.

II. Summary of the Forum

The following is a brief overview of the presentations to the Texas Advisory Committee at its May 1989 forum on early childhood education. All of this information is based on the transcript of the proceedings, which is on file in the Western Regional Division of the United States Commission on Civil Rights in Los Angeles.

Dr. Gloria Zamora, Director of Educational Equity, Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA)

Dr. Gloria Zamora's remarks focused on issues relating to educational equity. She cited the need for quality early childhood education programs. A recent paper by the Council of Chief State School Officers, she said, reported several recent demographic shifts that have created a greater need for nearly childhood education and family services. The first of these is the dramatic rise in the number of single parent families. By 1990, it is estimated that only 40 percent of children born in the United States will spend their entire childhood living with both parents. Children in these families in 1985 were five times as likely to be poor. Another demographic shift noted by Dr. Zamora involves the rise in the number of working

mothers. From 1970 to 1986, the percentage of working mothers increased from 29 percent to almost 55 percent; there has been a 108 percent increase in the number of working mothers with infants under 1 year of age.

Dr. Zamora also noted that child poverty has increased. Between 1979 and 1985 the number of children living in families below the poverty level grew from 3.5 million to 5 million. Forty percent of Hispanic children live in poverty. She explained that poverty is linked to school underachievement as a student from a low-income family is three times more likely to drop out of school. Each year that a child lives in poverty increases the likelihood that he or she will fall behind a grade level.

There is a growing body of research, Dr. Zamora continued, indicating that economically disadvantaged children benefit from early intervention. Thus, "it is imperative that we...do everything possible to ensure that our youngsters, especially those who are of low-income families, have access to quality early childhood education programs in order to improve their life chances," she stated.

Dr. Zamora then talked about the "right of access" to early childhood education. She said that while 43 percent of black and 39 percent of white 3 and 4 year-old children in the Nation are enrolled in these programs, this compares with only 27 percent for Hispanics. Since 1985, Texas has offered

public school pre-kindergarten programs to 4 year-olds who are economically disadvantaged and/or of limited English proficiency. The Texas Education Agency (T.E.A.) reported that in 1987-88, 56,000 of over 117,000 eligible 4 year-olds were enrolled in publicly supported half-day pre-kindergarten programs in 454 school districts in Texas. Because of lack of space and teachers, only 49 percent of eligible 4 year-olds participated in the program. This increased to 57 percent for 1988-1989. Dr. Zamora noted that Texas leads the Nation in offering early public school programs and yet over 40 percent of eligible children are not enrolled.

Dr. Zamora then addressed the status of education for immigrants in this country. The National Coalition of Advocates for Students (NCAS), in a publication entitled "New Voices," reported that there are between 2.1 to 2.7 million school-aged immigrants, ages 5 to 18, in the United States today. In 1986 one of every 10 new babies in this country was born to a mother who came here from another country. Dr. Zamora cited that these satistics to demonstrate that "in early childhood programs we have to be prepared to meet the needs of students who come from different language and cultural backgrounds." The NCAS also held hearings throughout the country, which she said produced "much evidence that immigrant students, both documented and undocumented are being denied access to schooling on the basis that they do not have, or

will not produce papers." Dr. Zamora noted that this takes place in spite of a Supreme Court ruling in Plyler v. Doe[47] in which the Court found that the State of Texas had an obligation to educate children of undocumented immigrants and extended to those children the equal protection clause of the 14th amendment of the Constitution.

Dr. Zamora then reminded the Committee of the Lau v. Nichols[48] Supreme Court decision that guaranteed special protections to limited English proficiency students (LEPs). According to Dr. Zamora these rights include: "the right to respect for their home language and culture; the right to fair and equitable testing; and the right to quality instruction by well-trained teachers." She noted a recent report of the Council of Chief State School Officers Resource Center on Educational Equity which found tht LEP students are not being served by many local school districts. The provision of adequate services to LEP students was hindered by lack of funding, shortage of qualified school personnel, constraining regulations, and lack of regulations. Dr. Zamora said that very few States have regulations and guidelines. The study

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[47]Plyler v. Doe, 457 U.S. 202 (1982).

[48]Lau v. Nichols, 414 U.S. 563 (1974).

also found that State education agencies do not effectively monitor LEP programs, nor do they have mechanisms for tracking the academic performance of former LEP students who have been reclassified into mainstream programs. Another major finding is that LEP students appear to be inappropriately placed in the "learning disabled and speech impaired categories of special education." Stated Dr. Zamora:

> Many children are tested in a language they do not understand and then are inappropriately labeled as speech impaired or learning disabled when, in actuality, they were tested in a language that they did not understand. And those children are placed in special education classes. Even in Texas, we have a 300 percent overrepresentation of limited English proficient children in special education categories.

Dr. Zamora stated that Texas has a law mandating bilingual education and that T.E.A. has published "very excellent guidelines" for schools to use in implementing these programs. Nonetheless, quality bilingual education is not being implemented in Texas "except in a few instances." She noted that "bilingual education programs exist in name only in many schools across this State. Thousands of LEP students are prematurely exited from bilingual and English As a Second Language (ESL) programs only to end up as at-risk students who become candidates for dropouts."

She observed that inappropriate testing is not only used to include students in special education classes, it is also

used to prematurely exit children from bilingual and ESL programs.

"The research," Dr. Zamora said, "clearly indicates to us that it takes 5 to 7 years to establish proficiency in a language." Yet, LEP children are frequently placed in mainstream programs at the end of 2 years, after kindergarten, and have not had an opportunity to develop sufficient English language skills to participate in a mainstream curriculum.

Dr. Zamora also questioned the quality of early childhood education programs in view of the fact that there are no early childhood certification requirements for teachers of 4 year-old children in Texas. She commented that strategies for early childhood instruction differ from those used in later elementary education.

Dr. Zamora noted that in an effort to meet newly enacted education reforms in Texas, many pre-schoolers are being judged not ready for first grade and are placed in developmental kindergarten classes or transitional classes. They must spend an extra year getting ready for first grade. She said, "the decision to design these programs puzzles me in light of research findings that clearly indicate that 'over-ageness' at any grade level is a factor that leads students to drop out of school." She added that 4 and 5 year-old children would not be candidates for failure or retention if they had quality teachers, appropriate testing,

excellent curriculum, and understandable instruction.

Dr. Zamora concluded her remarks by stating that "the children eligible for early childhood education today are the citizens of the 21st century. Unless we take action now, many will be doomed to a future with less than the minimal education necessary to be productive citizens. The loss of these human resources diminishes us as a nation...young children have rights, but they have only those rights that we choose to protect for them."

Dr. Lois Harrison-Jones, Associate Superintendent for Education, Dallas Independent School District

Dr. Lois Harrison-Jones came to the Dallas Independent School District (DISD) in November 1988 from the Superintendency of Schools in Richmond, Virginia. She stated that she was pleased to find that early childhood programs were intact and growing in the Dallas schools.

She expressed concern that young children are judged in narrow blocks of time, and noted that early childhood education should be viewed as pre-kindergarten through the third grade. It is important, she said, to allow for natural differences in the way children grow and develop.

She said that young children entering the classroom often come from deficit language homes, "where either English is not a second language, or where there is little oral

communication." In some homes, she explained, children are given directives instead of being engaged in meaningful conversation. Commands replace communication: "Come here. Sit down. Go to sleep." Other essential factors in child development cited by Dr. Harrison-Jones are: motor skills and motor development, the setting of attitudes, forming of habits, social and emotional development, and cognitive and creative development. She stressed the importance of creative development.

She recalled a discussion with a colleague wherein she was told that the schools may be spending more money on early childhood education than on senior high schools. Her friend could not understand why it was necessary to have two adults in each early childhood classroom; surely one teacher should be able to "manage" 3 and 4 year-olds.

Dr. Harrison-Jones then raised several concerns about the operation of the State's pre-kindergarten program. She noted that the students attend classes in split shifts, one group in the morning, another in the afternoon. She questioned whether working parents could take advantage of a half-day program: "It appears that you have to have fairly flexible schedules in order for your children to be enrolled...I would question whether or not the children who need it most are there." She also observed that in the Dallas district, transportation is not provided for the pre-kindergarten students.

She questioned whether, in light of the current focus on educational reform and funds directed toward at-risk students, it would not be better to target resources at an earlier level. She suggested that development and prevention might be a more lasting and effective way of working with young people than later remediation and rehabilitation.

In responding to Advisory Committee questions, Dr. Harrison-Jones indicated that limited English proficiency affects many children, including some who are not from non-English speaking homes. In some cases, schools have to deal with English as a second dialect, where the English spoken at home is not English of the mainstream. "We very often have to engage in very intensive language development experience for African American students who come from impoverished, or limited academically stimulating environments," she said.

In further addressing civil rights impacts of early childhood education, Dr. Harrison-Jones maintained that funds are necessary in order to assure that all students have access to experiences and exposures that will make them capable of succeeding. She also said that student assessment procedures are not culture-free and that there is bias in most of the standardized testing instruments.

Finally, she asserted that "any time we deny a person the opportunity to begin at the same point, we do impinge upon his

or her civil rights." And she noted that it will be much more difficult to [correct the inequities] at any later point in time.

Dr. Morris Holmes, Associate Superintendent for Instructional Services, Fort Worth Independent School District

Dr. Morris Holmes stated that "next to the death of a parent, and next to blindness, kids fear the tension of failure more than anything else." Therefore, failing a child at a very early age is a "Russian Roulette" game and represents a risk he is unwilling to make. Furthermore, kids who fail classes in early grades disproportionately become dropouts. So, he commented, early childhood education is critically important.

According to Dr. Holmes, the Fort Worth district serves 22,000 children, ages 4 through 8. The school district is composed of 35.6 percent Anglo; 35.5 African American; 26.3 Hispanic; 2.4 Asian American; and 0.2 American Indian. Fifty-two languages are spoken by this diverse population. "It is clear from these demographics," Dr. Holmes observed, "that decisions concerning early childhood programs within the school district affect many minority children. It is paramount that we make decisions and be vigilant and that we safeguard the rights of young children."

He then reviewed four strategies that he said are imperative to assure that minority children enter into an

appropriate multicultural educational process:

Strategy number one. Staffing of teachers who are sensitive and knowledgeable of diverse cultures. Children have a right to role models who are representative of their racial and ethnic makeup, and who exhibit positive attitudes about cultural diversity.

Strategy number two. Recognizing parents as partners in the education of their children. It is the child's right to have the opportunity for maximum educational experience, both inside and outside of the school setting. For this to occur, parents must be recognized as partners in education and educators must develop strategies for including parents in planning and implementing school tasks and in helping them to extend and support their child's learning.

Strategy number three. Providing meaningful curriculum activities, instructional materials, and assessment procedures to be presented in a culturally sensitive, appropriate environment. Learning to respect one's differences and having pride in one's cultural heritage are essential to the developing child. Standardized assessments should never be used to stereotype young children or to set boundaries for their educational opportunities.

Strategy number four. Helping to provide for a young child's basic right to adequate nutrition and appropriate health care. It is a child's right to a healthy, safe school

environment, to nutrition which contributes to a well-adjusted school experience, and access to health care.

In concluding his statement, Dr. Holmes observed that improving the prospects of minority children for a productive place in society "is not an expense, but an excellent investment...an individual's civil rights in his formative years can be marked by enhancement or deprivation, depending on the type of programs we provide."

In response to an Advisory Committee question, Dr. Holmes stated that all children bring to school a rich linguistic background, although these may represent a different experience from other groups. The challenge, he concluded, is training teachers to learn how language is acquired and what language means in terms of community.

Vidal Trevino, Superintendent, Laredo Independent School District

Vidal Trevino noted that the Laredo school district, with 25,000 students, is one of the poorest school districts in Texas. This year, his schools accepted 1,250 students who last year resided and attended school in Mexico. These students arrive with little or no knowledge of English.

According to Mr. Trevino, the highest number of retentions in his district is at the first grade level. Approximately one-third of all first graders were held back last year, representing 50 percent of all retentions in grades

one through five. Why? The superintendent said that the students had not mastered all the prerequisite skills needed to perform at the second grade level, and this is a State requirement. The Laredo district has unique problems, one of which is that "not only can Johnny not read, Juanito cannot speak," Mr. Trevino said. The skills required to advance cannot be mastered in 1 year when you have a predominant population whose primary language is not English, he explained. The students failed because they needed more time and "we're going to give them more time."

Mr. Trevino, stated that the schools must give children a chance to experience success in the early years. We have allowed them to experience failure, not success, he observed.

What we need is to make sure that they experience the kind of things that we all want for our children, experiences from which language evolves and learning takes place. Without these experiences, a first grader in Laredo cannot relate, Mr. Trevino stated. "We have an opportunity. We either spend money on early childhood education now, or we pay dearly later," he added.

The dropout problem cannot be attacked at the high school level, or even the middle school level, Mr. Trevino noted. The problem must be addressed in the formative years, in the early childhood years. The problems of drug abuse and teenage pregnancies are all related and must be attacked successfully

at the early childhood level, he continued. "Once behind, always behind," he commented.

The superintendent then explained the program that has been developed in the Laredo schools, which he referred to as a "sequential coordinated approach" to instruction in the early childhood program. "We are taking [children] as young as we can. We are giving them the extra time we think they need. We are bringing in a multitude of experiences for them in the classroom, and we are telling them that we expect them to succeed and we are going to help them succeed." Mr. Trevino said, adding that to this point, the early childhood program is working.

All 62 teachers in the program are trained and certified in early childhood education. The teacher who teaches the pre-kindergarten student will have the same student in kindergarten. This gives them 2 years of working with the same student, which Mr. Trevino said, is very important.

He described a federally funded program called the Home Instruction Program, which identifies 2 and 3 year-olds in targeted areas who receive instruction at home in basic oral language English and Spanish from their parents who in turn receive instruction in how to teach their children from home/school community aides. "The concept behind this phase of the early childhood program is based on the premise that,

due to a lack of language skills, a 4 year-old child who comes into the Laredo schools pre-kindergarten program is already behind his Anglo counterparts," he said. Although the children get to practice the language and prepare for school, the greatest advantage of the program may be "true parental involvement coupled with a commitment to the child's education."

Once they complete this program at home, the children are enrolled in a pre-kindergarten program that is dedicated to oral language development. This State-mandated program is designed for high-risk 4 year-olds who are of limited English proficiency and/or below the economic subsistence level. In addition to language acquisition, this is also an experience-oriented program.

After the pre-kindergarten program, the children are eligible for an 8 week summer program, where their oral English skills are further upgraded. They then enter kindergarten, where oral language development is continued as needed, however, the primary emphasis is on reading readiness. According to Mr. Trevino, the intensive early childhood programs are designed to assure that students enter kindergarten with adequate English listening and speaking skills. "It is at this point," he stated, "that Juanito and others like him are ready to learn to read."

At the end of the kindergarten program, the students are

again eligible to attend another 8-week summer remediation program before entering the first grade. At this point, they are expected to be at grade level. And starting this year, Mr. Trevino noted, students who have not successfully completed the first grade will be eligible to attend a 7-week summer school program to enable them to complete all the requirements for advancement.

Mr. Trevino observed that students who are not promoted are prime candidates to be dropouts. Prior to the early childhood programs in Laredo, children were still in the process of learning English at the end of the kindergarten year and were not ready for reading at the first grade level. Therefore, students were promoted to the first grade and were unable to cope. The result, he said, was failure.

Mr. Trevino concluded his statement by summarizing the advantages of the Laredo school district's early childhood programs:

> Before entering the first grade, students will have had at ages 2 and 3 the home instruction program; 1 year of pre-kindergarten at age 4; 1 year of kindergarten at age 5; 16 weeks in two summer sessions, and after completion of the first grade, additional help is offered to them in a third summer program. It is a sequential program. It is working for the Laredo school district...I think it would work, in fact I know it would work for all school districts that have a large number of non-English speaking students.

In response to a Committee question concerning the

inequities in public school finance, Mr. Trevino responded:

> The funding of education in the State of Texas is not equitable. It has never been. Not as long as you depend on property taxes for financing education. Geography should have nothing to do with the quality of education that a student receives. And, yet geography now makes a tremendous difference as to the quality of education.

He also maintained that early childhood education is a civil rights issue. Because, he said, "if you do not treat it as a civil rights issue; these youngsters who fall behind, who are going to fail, will become a burden on society. They are not going to be the kind of citizens that this country deserves and needs. You are treating [them] already as second-rate citizens, knowingly projecting that that's all they are going to be. In that respect, I believe it is a civil rights issue."

James Vasquez, Superintendent, Edgewood Independent School District

James Vasquez remarked that he is an "at-risk" superintendent. The Edgewood School District (in San Antonio) is the home of the well-known Rodriguez[49] case and now the Edgewood v. Kirby[50] lawsuit, he noted. Both cases challenged the method for financing public schools in Texas. According to Mr. Vasquez, "the fundamental question being raised here is

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[49]San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez, 411 U.S. 1 (1973).

[50]Edgewood v. Kirby, Texas Supreme Court decision, Oct. 2, 1989 (unreported).

a clear civil rights issue, which has to do with equal protection under the law." He reminded the Committee that the U.S. Supreme Court, in Rodriguez, held that education is not a right guaranteed by the Constitution. The school financing system, as such, does not interfere with a right guaranteed by the Constitution. (411 U.S. 35, 40.) The case was remanded back to the State. Now, 20 years later, the Edgewood district is back in court, pending a hearing before the State supreme court to determine if the finance issue "rises to equal protection under the State Constitution."[51] Mr. Vasquez asserted what he considers to be the basic question: "Is education in Texas the fundamental right of children? If it is, it then rises to the level of protection under the State constitution, which is really broader than the Federal Constitution in providing protection and providing access to the protection of the laws of this State."

Mr. Vasquez further maintained that there is segregation in Texas as a result of inadeqaute resources for poorer school districts. He has conducted research reflecting that 90 percent of the children who attend the 200 public schools

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[51]On Oct. 2, 1989 the Texas Supreme Court ruled unanimously that the State's system for financing public schools is unconstitutional, citing glaring disparities between what rich and poor school districts spend on education. The court's 9-0 decision found that this unequally violates a provision of the Texas Constitution requiring the State legislature to support and maintain an efficient system for the general diffusion of knowledge. (New York Times, Oct. 3, 1989, p. 1).

along the Texas-Mexico border are minorities.

He then related the school finance question to early childhood education. He said that funding is a fundamental civil rights issue that "permeates across the State as you look at property wealth in relation to what school districts can deliver to children in their charge." And "when these children happen to come from homes where the parents (if they have both) are unemployed and lack the resources or education to provide the benefits of early childhood development...I think it's a given that funding of schools to provide for these deficits is crucial to the development of the potential of these children throughout the State of Texas." According to the superintendent, based on developments during the current session of the State legislature, the inequities in public school finance will not be resolved by the legislative branch, but will require action by the courts.

Mr. Vasquez was pleased that the State has just eliminated testing at the first grade level. This will allow a change of focus in early childhood education. Instead of concentrating on the mastery of specific skills, emphasis can be directed in the early years to development of the "cooperative and creative potential" of 4 to 7 year-olds. According to Mr. Vasquez, this involves using the learning styles of children to help them develop the "cognitive apparatus" to make them good learners in later life.

He stressed that if a child fails once in school, the potential to dropout is approximately 50 percent. If a chld fails twice, the dropout potential is nearly 100 percent. He called for "education in tandem" that provides for the education of both the parent and the child. Educational programs for parents and pre-preschool programs for children are essential in the Edgewood district, because "we have the highest rate of unemployment, the highest concentration of public housing, the highest rate of teenage pregnancies, among the lowest school completion rates, and one of the highest illiteracy rates in the county, and probably in the State." Mr. Vasquez observed that the rate of teenage pregnancies and single-parent households is extremely high. It is necessary, he said, to look beyond what capabilities are normally assumed the child brings to school in order to progress in a structured school setting. "That child doesn't exist anymore," he concluded.

In response to an Advisory Committee inquiry, Mr. Vasquez noted that Edgewood is one of the first urban school districts to begin early childhood education without State money. However, he added:

> When you are dealing with children that do not have the stimulation that the typical white middle-class child has in our society, the school has to step in and try to provide those experiences, that stimulation, so that the child, at some point in time, has an opportunity to

> broaden his field of experiences, to go forward and to achieve. And, anyone who believes that you can do that without money, I am readily available to consult with you, because I don't know how to buy more teachers to provide more services. I don't know how to provide more field trips so that kids can leave our neighborhood. I don't know how to buy those things called "writing to read laboratories" that cost $75,000 each, so they can begin early writing activities, without money.

Dr. Emmett Conrad, Texas State Board of Education

Dr. Emmett Conrad cited some statistics about the status of the family, which he concluded has been "essentially destroyed." Each day last year, he said, 1,702 infants were born to black mothers in the United States. One thousand forty-two of them were born to unmarried mothers. Each day in 1986, 700 black girls, between the age of 14 and 15 became pregnant. Nine out of 10 were born to unmarried teens. Between 70 and 80 percent of black children in America live in poverty and without both parents, he noted. "This all has a tremendous impact on success or failure in our education system," Dr. Conrad commented. The data, he indicated, also point out the need for extended day care and prenatal care for mothers. Furthermore, 67 percent of black children in school came from either one-parent homes or homes where both parents work. "The dropout rate in Texas is astounding," he continued, "There are fewer and fewer blacks who are finishing high school, fewer and fewer who are going into colleges, and even smaller numbers who are selecting to become teachers."

He said the reason is obvious: On the Texas Academic Skills Test, which determines whether a student is prepared for college, only 15 percent of the 419 blacks who took the last exam passed. This compares with a passing rate of 86 percent for the 5,339 whites who took the same exam (for Hispanics, the figures are 16.9 percent and 1,600 respectively). Dr. Conrad also noted that 492 blacks took the professional test required for admission to graduate level education courses, and 56 percent failed. For whites and Hispanics, the figures were 678 (16 percent) and 1,800 (51 percent), respectively.

He also maintained that the reduction in student loans and other economic reversals for blacks combined with high failure rates on exams means "that eventually, we will have total extinction of black educators, which would be tragic." At a time when children need the image and model of someone of their own background, he explained, there will be fewer and fewer Hispanics or blacks available to teach school. Dr. Conrad also noted that less than 3 percent of all graduate students in Texas are black, and that the percentage is not much better for Hispanics.

In advocating greater prenatal care, he cited recent medical research which found that children receiving adequate prenatal care, nutrition, and social development have a much larger number of brain cells at the end of their second year than those who do not. Dr. Conrad called for earlier childhood intervention because "by the time we get the child,

even at 4 years of age in preschool, a success or failure pattern is already established." Dr. Conrad also advocated parenting programs, lowering of class size, utilizing of technology to aid in education, and concluded that the key to all of this is money and the availability of people to serve the needs of all children. The hardest hit, he said, are usually the poorest because affluent families find a way of getting a better education for their children by private means. He called for everyone to become deeply involved in the pursuit of improved early childhood education, "because if we are not, America will become a second-rate economic nation...We are well on our way," he said.

In response to Committee questions, Dr. Conrad lamented that Texas may spend more money on prisons than on education and noted that the average grade level of a person in prison in Texas is fifth grade. The failure to educate this population earlier is the reason for this tragedy, he observed, and "tells you a great deal of why society is failing."

Delia Pompa, Assistant Commissioner, Texas Education Agency

Delia Pompa said that over half of the children in Texas live in poverty in some areas. Black and Hispanic children are more than twice as likely as white children to live in poverty. This, she said, "has a true civil rights impact when we talk about early childhood education." She listed other serious problems affecting educational opportunities: drug and substance abuse, low birth weight babies, teen parents,

single parents, working mothers, and homeless children.

Ms. Pompa noted that there is a renewed focus on the importance of early childhood education, and organizations such as the Council of Chief State School Officials, the National Governors Association, and the National Association of School Boards have all addressed the issue. Most importantly, she said, the Committee on Economic Development, which consists of business executives, has demonstrated concern. The committee examined extensive information and concluded that the most important thing that could be done to prepare a productive America for the year 2000 was to provide quality early childhood programs. The business leaders determined that the key to solving society's problems down the road was early prevention, Ms. Pompa stated.

The Texas Education Agency recently reported to the legislature that over 91,000 children dropped out of schools last year. This, she said, accounts for almost a 7 percent dropout rate in 1 year. Based on these statistics, she projected that the actual dropout rate for children in the State is approximately 36 percent.

Currently Hispanics make up 32 percent, and blacks 15 percent, of the public school population. However, based on trends and projections, Ms. Pompa that the State's population will soon represent a majority/minority and by the year 2000, only one in three children in the school system will be white. Therefore, she observed that the populations that have

"unfortunately historically been overrepresented in poverty, overrepresented in undereducation, overrepresented in all of the ills of society...that's the population we are going to be serving in our schools in the future."

The State, she maintained, has a very strong law regarding pre-kindergarten education. The program is provided for children in any district with at least 15 children meeting the eligibility criteria. These criteria are either limited English proficiency or economic need, the latter based on free and reduced lunch eligibility in the State.

There are 455 school districts offering the program this year, and they serve over 58,000 children, or about 49 percent of those eligible. The primary reason more youth are not served, according to Ms. Pompa, is that the program is structured as a half-day program and working parents are unable to take advantage of it. The program is not feasible as day care for children and therefore not suitable for many working parents.

The pre-kindergarten program is, however, developmentally appropriate and much work has been done to assure that qualified teachers are in the classrooms. While the State board of education does not require that teachers in the program have early childhood or kindergarten certification, most districts make every effort to recruit those who do. Extra training in early childhood education is provided to those who do not have the certification. Ms. Pompa said that one of the reasons why certification is not required by the

State is the fear that a sufficient number of qualified teachers could not be found. "We have a major teacher shortage in Texas," she stated, especially in bilingual education, special education, and early childhood education.

Ms. Pompa also described other State programs, including the full-day kindergarten which is open to all children, and a migrant program that reaches children as young as 3 years old. There is also a federally mandated early childhood intervention program for the handicapped.

Early childhood programs operated outside of the educational system include Title 20 day care programs and Head Start. These, however, serve only a small percent of eligible children because of inadequate funding, she said.

A new Federal program called Even Start, she continued, has recently been created which provides funds for adult education for undereducated parents who have children in either the State's pre-kindergarten program or Head Start. Funding has yet to be allocated to Texas, but Ms. Pompa said that it is "a drop in the bucket."

Other programs mentioned by the assistant commissioner that are also focusing on early childhood education include adult basic education, family literacy, bilingual programs, and community education. The latter are funded primarily by private agencies and businesses and are providing leadership in the development of programs for "latch-key" children, at

the grass-roots level.

There has been legislative support for early childhood education programs within key committees and also by the Lieutenant Governor who in his anticrime package recommended that the quickest, easiest, and most feasible way to prevent crime was to provide early childhood education. However, Ms. Pompa noted, very few of the education bills were enacted into law.

Despite all the positive emphasis, the assistant commissioner concluded that early childhood efforts in Texas are scattered and not accessible to every child who needs them. Neither are parenting programs accessible to every parent who needs them, she added.

She concluded by insisting that early childhood education is a civil rights issue, especially in light of the dramatic growth of the nonwhite population in the State and the unequal access to quality programs.

Ethel Jones, Principal, Dunbar Elementary School, Texarkana Independent School District

Ethel Jones is the principal of Dunbar Elementary School in Texarkana, a kindergarten through fifth grade campus with approximately 400 students. She said that Dunbar is a typical inner-city school. Over 85 percent of the students are on the free lunch program and between 25 and 40 percent come from culturally deprived or low socioeconomic backgrounds. It is

very common for these 25 to 40 percent of the students "to be on welfare, to live in public or substandard housing with a single female parent who is often chemically dependent, lacked prenatal care, and who was a teen mother," Ms. Jones said. Children from this environment are themselves often hostile, angry, and have low esteem. They are very often difficult to teach, Ms. Jones noted, and fall behind in school. She emphasized that these conditions are not the fault of the children and, in many cases, not the fault of the parents. "No one wants to be on welfare...People don't want to live this way, and I hope that all of you understand that," she commented.

Ms. Jones took exception to a recent study that she said indicated that early childhood programs do not benefit children by the time they reach third grade. She stressed that early childhood programs would put students ahead at that level. Based on her own experience, students who had early childhood training are more prepared for kindergarten. Those who have not been in such a program don't qualify for gifted and talented programs, and don't know any prereadiness skills, Ms. Jones said. "Often they are behind when they enter and they stay behind during their elementary years...and you know what this means, they drop out and they end up on the streets," she observed.

The principal suggested that providing proper parenting

skills would "help enormously." In middle-class homes, prereadiness skills are taught by coincidence, by discussions around the dinner table, and by the cultural exposure parents provide their children.

She then discussed the success experienced at Dunbar School. Although student test scores have improved, Ms. Jones judges success in the "affective domain."[52] She sees children who have high self-esteem and feel good about themselves, who respect their individuality, and who strive for excellence. The goal she has set for Dunbar is to "offer the very best instructional program possible, with a highly trained staff that understands low-income minority students." In addition, the school operates with a high degree of structure and strict rules and regulations. The children know the rules up front, she said, and also the consequences of breaking these rules. She sets high expectations for her staff and students. The students are expected to do well (A/B work).

Resource persons are also brought in from the community to speak to the students. These are professional people and Ms. Jones said that the children need to see themselves in positive roles. Therefore, since her school consists of 85 percent black students, she tries to maintain this percentage of resource people. The school also has a very strong counseling program and the children receive recognition for

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[52]A psychological term descriptive of emotions or feelings.

excellence. Finally, Ms. Jones said that Dunbar practices "strong community involvement." Parents are invited to become involved in the instructional program and are taught how to work with their children and how to help them with their homework.

In concluding her remarks, she recommended that "we encourage higher education to place more emphasis on training teacher candidates to work with low-income students...and that we place more emphasis on recruiting minority students in higher education...and males for early childhood education and elementary school teaching." She also called for expanding early childhood programs such as Head Start and encouraging or mandating welfare parents to attend parenting workshops.

Ms. Jones implored everyone "to see to it that all of our children receive a fair chance early in life...We must do it early in life and pay a small fee, or we do it later in life and pay a large fee."

Gloria Rodriguez, Executive Director, AVANCE Family Support and Educational Program

Gloria Rodriguez started the AVANCE program 15 years ago in San Antonio as a result of her frustration as a school teacher. In 1970, she was given the assignment of teaching 6 year old children who were expected to fail. Initially, she thought that bilingual education was going to be the answer, however, she found that the children were not proficient in English or Spanish. Many of them also lacked self-esteem and

were threatened by her when she approached them. Ms. Rodriguez said that she then realized that there were many problems in the home that were affecting their performance in school.

Ms. Rodriguez was exposed to parent education and decided that this was a good alternative to addressing the high dropout problems. Therefore, she initiated AVANCE in 1973 and it has been growing and evolving into a very comprehensive program. There are four centers in San Antonio and one in Houston. In several communities, the centers are located in public housing projects. The program is not a part of the school system but functions within the communities themselves.

The AVANCE program has received much favorable national publicity, including at least two New York Times editorials praising its work. One of these concludes:

> Millions of affluent Americans are the descendants of people who were just as poor and just as helpless as the mothers in AVANCE. Still, getting out of poverty may have been a little easier in the days when almost any one could get a job laying bricks or hammering nails. AVANCE has worked for 14 years to put poor San Antonio children on the right path. It demonstrates that Americans everywhere can do more than denounce welfare mothers or lament juvenile delinquents. America can give poor children a Fair Chance, and their parents a second one.

In testimony before Congress, Dr. David A. Hamburg, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York described

his organization's support of AVANCE:

> Parents enroll when their children are anywhere from birth to three years of age and all families in the community are welcome. In addition, there is systematic door-to-door recruitment by the staff. The emphasis is on the parents' own developement, especially a basis for self-esteem and perception of opportunity, improved decision-making skills, and specific knowledge of child development. In the latter respect, there is direct demonstration and modeling, encouraging play, seeking points of mutual pleasure between mother and child, and giving feedback in constructive ways. The core component is a nine-month parent education activity...The parents are taught that they themselves can be educators, and they are shown concretely how to facilitate the development of their own children. AVANCE already has some evidence that the program fosters knowledge of child development, increases hopefulness about the future, enhances propects in this poor community, decreases punitive approaches to child discipline, and generally improves the climate of mother-child interaction.

Ms. Rodriguez said that "an adequate education...is one of those fundamental rights that every American citizen deserves. Unfortunately, too many minority families are not receiving an adequate education and an alarming number are dropping out of school." She noted that 80 percent of the predominantly Hispanic mothers served by AVANCE have not completed high school. Consequently, they lack literacy and saleable job skills.

In a recent research study supported by the Carnegie Corporation, AVANCE found that up to 60 percent of the women in one of the housing projects served by thc program suffer

from severe depression. The survey also fund a negative correlation between material self-esteem and depression. Thirty percent of the women had thought of, or had attempted suicide. Many were victims of abuse. Many lacked support and felt isolated and overwhelmed in their parental role. According to Ms. Rodriguez, "they had lost hope, energy and motivation to improve their quality of life and consequently they had low expectations that their children would do any better." She believed that the root of today's social and academic problems stem from weak families "crying out for help" and not receiving it. Research has demonstrated, she added, that a mother's education is one of the most important contributing factors associated with school success. Educators can not separate the home from the school, she noted, and "you can have the best teachers and the best principals, but the child always goes back to the same environment."

In addressing the 40 to 50 percent of Hispanic youth who are failing or dropping out of school, Ms. Rodriguez noted that these children many times enter schools that are culturally different, where the language spoken is not the same as in the home, where most of the teachers they encounter are non-Hispanics, and where the books are not relevant to their immediate environment. More importantly, their families have never been adequately supported. Unlike the first wave of European immigrants, who were assisted through settlement

homes, Ms. Rodriguez continued, "services to low-income families have been piecemeal, fragmented, band aid approaches, too little and too late." Schools have separated themselves from the home and have been threatening to many parents, she maintained.

The AVANCE program works, Ms. Rodriguez said. Parents involved in the program have been found to be more nurturing and more responsive. Their attitudes toward education and their knowledge of child development have improved. The participants also have higher self-esteem and are not only learning to be good parents, but are themselves returning to school to further their own education. These parents, she predicted, will be good role models for their children and wil be active partners in the educational process.

Ms. Rodriguez concluded her statement with the following perspective:

> If we want to achieve equity in education, then it is imperative that we begin during the child's critical, formative years -- from conception to age four with the parents who are the child's first and most important teachers. Educational intervention must begin in the home; be community-based; be comprehensive in scope; be preventive in nature; and provide sequential services to children and their parents. We must rebuild families, and we must rebuild communities.

Joyce Herron, Principal and Director, Trinity Christian School, Lubbock

Joyce Herron said that she was speaking as a mother of 33

years, a grandmother of 12 years, and as a teacher and principal for 30 years. She spent her first 20 years as an educator in the inner city of Los Angeles. During this tenure, she learned that the "child needs the parents, or at least the grandparents for nurturing, supporting, and caring in order to become a stable adult." She believes that the lack of stability comes from problems at home, "not from the lack of formal education by strangers."

Ms. Herron said that "we must be very careful that the result of federally funded programs will not encourage mothers to desert their most important job, that of being responsible for the training and bonding and stability of their child." She stated that, based on her experience, the thrust to provide equal educational opportunities must be toward more support to the families, not taking the child out of the home. She noted that Dr. Burton White, former director of the Harvard Preschool Project, concluded after 30 years of research that he would not think of putting "an infant or toddler" of his own into any substitute care program on a full time basis.

She was critical of the absence of parental involvement in the educational process. She referred to a study of Swedish day care centers that she said concluded that the psychological development of a child in its initial years is better in an ordinary home environment then in any State care

facility, "regardless of how excellent it is."

Schools across the country must encourage more and more parent involvement and training, Ms. Herron observed. When she opened her school in Lubbock, she insisted that parents be involved in training and observation. The school has a parent activity center and she requires that parents discipline their children. Otherwise, they may not place them in the school. The school opened with only 23 three and 4 year-olds, and two teachers. Now, there are 599 children, from 3 year-olds to 11th graders, enrolled. Teachers welcome parents in the classroom, and "there is peace in the school," Ms. Herron observed.

Ms. Herron said, "We are giving up the use of our grandparents with federally funded education programs. Children need their grandparents...and want to be around them." They can contribute much to the training of our youth, she asserted.

She proposed the following solutions, based on research that stresses the importance of the parents and home in a child's development:

> Number one, for those mothers who desire to stay at home with their child, allow them a tax credit. Number two, for those mothers who must work out of necessity but have strong principles by which they raise their children, allow them a tax credit to apply toward the care by an individual who holds similar beliefs and concerns. Number three, for those working parents who place value in the extended family - grandparents, aunts, uncles - allow a tax

> credit applicable to this group for the care of their children. And, certainly encourage and perhaps demand more parent involvement in our schools.

Ms. Herron concluded by observing that formal education is not the answer to the child care dilemma, but instead the tax credit system and family involvement and support are the most viable means of providing equal educational opportunity.

Sue C. Gainer, President-Elect, Texas Association for the Education of Young Children

Sue Gainer said that the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), with 60,000 members, is the largest early childhood professional organization in the Nation. The Texas chapter has approximately 30 affiliate groups across the State, with about 3,000 members. These include teachers, parents, administrators, professors, psychologists, social workers, physicians, nurses, care givers, and students. Their common goal, she explained, is to meet the emotional, physical and cognitive needs of developing children. They are also concerned about families and about the professionals who work with children.

In a statement of the NAEYC, distributed to the Advisory Committee by Ms. Gainer, entitled Guiding Principles for the Development and Analysis of Early Childhood Legislation 1989, the organization calls for "programs...designed to include children from a variety of ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds." The statement also advocates that

"policies...intentionally or unintentionally [resulting] in segregation on the basis of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or special need, including "at-risk" status must be rectified."

Ms. Gainer works for Child Care Dallas, a nonprofit corporation that provides "high quality, well managed child care services." Most of the families served are low income minority families. In 1988 the profile of a client in the programs operated by Child Care Dallas was a "single minority female with about 2.5 children, with an income of $10,000 or less," she stated.

Ms. Gainer noted that in 1985 Texas had 4,798,000 children under the age of 18. About 1.5 million were under 5 years old and 3.3 million were between 5 and 17. Children made up 29.3 percent of the total population and 1.14 million of them lived in poverty. This means that about 23.8 percent of all children in Texas were poor, 35.4 percent of all black children were in poverty, and 47.9 percent of Hispanic children were poor.

She also commented that although the largest number of illiterate adults are native-born American whites, in proportion to population, the figures are higher for blacks and Hispanics. Sixteen percent of white adults, 44 percent of blacks and 56 percent of Hispanic citizens are functional or marginal illiterates, she noted. Forty-seven percent of all black 17-year-olds are functionally illiterate, Ms. Gainer

added, and this figure is expected to increase to 50 percent by 1990.

Children living in poverty are "at risk" for school failure. Of all teenagers living in poverty, more than 4 out of 10 white teens, more than half of Hispanic teens, and more than 6 of 10 blacks teens fall in the lowest skills group on achievement tests. Youth who have the weakest reading and math skills, she noted, when compared to those who have above average basic skills are:

> Nine times more likely to drop out of school before graduation;
>
> Eight times more likely to have children out of wedlock;
> Five times more likely to be both out of work and out of school;
>
> Four times more likely to be forced to turn to public assistance for basic income support.

Thus, Ms. Gainer commented that "significant portions of our minority citizens are living in poverty and are not being adequately educated so that they can become self-sufficient positive human resources to our communities and society."

The solutions, she observed, involve not only improving education but also improving the quality and availability of child care. Because so many single mothers and two-parent families are working, young children are now increasingly receiving care outside of the home. So it is a care issue as well as an education issue, she stressed. Ms. Gainer said that child care programs are inadequately funded. She advocated greater parental involvement, providing environments

that motivate children to succeed, and investment of resources in high quality care and education programs for at-risk, low-income children. She maintained that for every dollar invested in such programs, the return is $7. That is because society will not have to pay for mental health, special education, and other remedial services. Quality care and education programs, she observed, cause children to stay in school and become contributing taxpayers in our society.

She agreed with other forum participants that there are not enough trained teachers and supervisors in the field of early childhood education. And, she continued, "we need programs specifically geared and planned for young children." Young children learn differently from school-aged children. Therefore, programs should be developmentally appropriate and should also contain strong parent participation components, Ms. Gainer said.

Finally, she said that legislation and other initiatives for early care and education programs must improve program quality and provide equitable access to good programs. "Not all low-income and minority children have access to good programs," she concluded.

Stella Mullins, Executive Director of the Mental Health Association in Texas

Stella Mullins stated that the Mental Health Association in Texas has been in the business of child abuse prevention

for many years "from advocating for services and providing public education, to affecting legislative changes and funding new approaches." Their experience has led them to believe that although parents want their children to have the best start in life, "most of us are not exposed to the knowledge base and skills that are presently available to make parenting the most productive experience possible."

Ms. Mullins stated that research shows that most of a person's intellectual capacity is developed before the age of 5. The years from birth to 3 are of crucial importance and "thus the whole educational enterprise, from kindergarten through graduate school rests on the foundation provided in the home."

She then cited several institutions that have advocated parenthood education as representing a critical need. These include the New York based Committee for Economic Development, the House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families, and the Committee on Human Resources of the National Governor's Association. The research, she said, confirms what these groups have to say - "let us put more money and support into the earliest years where it can most benefit the quality of life."

Several years ago, the Mental Health Association in Texas began searching for a parenthood education model appropriate to Texas that would focus on the early years of a child's

life. The program selected was one implemented in 1981 by the Missouri Department of Education called Parents as First Teachers. It was designed to provide educational guidance and support for parents of children from birth to age 3. Four school districts were chosen to participate in the program and each recruited 80 to 100 families. The program offered the following services to the families:

> Information and guidance before the baby is born, to help the parents prepare themselves psychologically;
>
> Information about things to look for and expect in a growing child, and guidance in fostering language, cognitive, social, and motor skill development;
>
> Periodic checkups of the child's educational and sensory (hearing and vision) development to detect possible problems or handicaps. If serious problems are discovered, help is sought from other agencies or professionals;
>
> A parent resource center, located in a school building, which provides a meeting place for parents and staff, and facilities for child care during parent meetings;
>
> Monthly hour-long private visits in the home or at the center to individualize the education program for each family;
>
> Monthly group meetings with other new parents to share experiences and discuss topics of interest.

Ms. Mullins reported that the Missouri program was evaluated by an independent agency that found the children of the program to have: better intellectual and language development, more positive social development, and fewer undetected incidents of handicapping conditions. Parents in the program demonstrated increased knowledge of child development and positive attitudes about the school system.

The program has been so successful that, according to Ms. Mullins, the Missouri legislature has appropriated funds and mandated all school districts in the State to offer Parents as Teachers programs.[53]

The Mental Health Association in Texas is currently duplicating the program in Texas. With the assistance of the Texas Education Agency, three sites in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area are participating in a pilot project (Allen, Garland, and Ft. Worth school districts). Funding has been provided by the Children's Trust Fund, the Texas Education Agency, the Mental Health Foundation, and other private donations. The Mental Health Association has recently become an affiliate of the National Center for Parents as Teachers in order to train and certify parent educators in Texas. Three training sessions

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[53] Newsweek magazine recently cited the program as one that has "succeeded in increasing a youngster's chances of escaping to a better life." In a cover story addressing the crisis confronting children of America's underclass, the magazine reported: "Poor children, once they start school, often lag behind their classmates--and never catch up. To change the pattern, the Missouri school system eight years ago launched an early-intervention project called Parents As Teachers...The program is in the midst of its first follow-up study to judge long-term success. But the Harvard Family Research Project has been impressed. In a 1985 state-funded analysis, children had better language skills and problem-solving abilities than kids who had not participated. Two years later Missouri's education department gave the project a vote of confidence by setting up a National Parents as Teachers Center in St. Louis to help school systems around the country create their own home-training programs." James N. Baker with Regina Elam, "Programs That Can Make a Difference," Newsweek, Sept. 11, 1989 p. 28.

have already been conducted with participation by many school districts. The long-term goal of the program is to make it available to all parents in Texas who have children ages zero to 3, Ms. Mullins concluded.

Collen Parro, Eagle Forum

Colleen Parro spoke on behalf of the Eagle Forum, a national organization of 80,000 members [5,000 of them in Texas] that is working to develop public policy beneficial to the families of America.

She began by stating that only 23 percent of mothers of pre-school children are in the full-time paid labor force in this country. The remainder who are employed, she said, are in part-time jobs "and trying very hard, according to our information, to avoid day care."

Ms. Parro noted that 55 percent of mothers of children in elementary school are raising their children "in a traditional fashion." And, she added, "we believe that early childhood education programs would not benefit the majority of children in America, no matter what their race, religion, national origin, or income level." There are two reasons for this, she said. First, there is no body of evidence that demonstrates that early childhood education "has any lasting effect." To the contrary, Ms. Parro said that "consistent studies" of Head Start indicate that benefits derived by children in the

program disappear by the time the child reaches third grade, "usually due to cultural conditions." Secondly, although there is a historical consensus among Americans that tax-supported public education is a good thing, "there is no consensus that institutionalizing very young children is a public good. Current studies by social scientists, child development experts, and pediatricians demonstrate the opposite is true," she maintained.

She asserted that the "current push for early childhood education is part of a vast national plan to establish taxpayer funded and government controlled day care administered through the public schools." She further charged that scores of liberals are attempting to get small children into institutions and mothers into the paid labor force, thereby "building a huge bureaucracy so that government jobs will be available for their professional friends." According to some government estimates, Ms. Parro continued, 800,000 additional jobs would be created if 3, 4, and 5 year-olds were in some form of pre-school program.

Americans, she said, reject the notion that the government get involved in childrearing. However, social planners are now advocating taking the children out of the home "when they are very little" and putting them in a professional setting in order to solve the problems of crime, drugs, and teenage promiscuity, she observed.

"The cycle of dependency caused by the runaway welfare system" has resulted in "the deterioration of the traditional family as the bulwark of our nation," she commented. Until government policies are established that encourage the return of the mother into the home, Ms. Parro maintained, "our children will continue to grow like weeds, untended, and venturing into areas of experience that are unhealthy and often criminal."

She noted that President Reagan established criteria by which family policy should be judged, including "Does this action strengthen or erode the authority and rights of parents in the education, nurture, and supervision of their children?" And, "Does this action help the family perform its functions, or does it substitute governmental activity for the function?" Judged by this criteria, Ms. Parro concluded, "early childhood education for the majority of U.S. children, regardless of race, is unacceptable."

Ms. Parro criticized the Head Start program as far too costly and noted that President Bush has asked Congress for an additional $250 million to expand the program. In addressing non-English speaking households, where children are considered at-risk by current legislative standards in Texas, Ms. Parro raised this question: "Is a mother somehow less qualified to love and nurture her child because she speaks a foreign

language?" She maintained that children pick up English very quickly once they enter kindergarten or first grade.

Ms. Parro also cautioned minority group leaders to examine what early intervention into the lives of children through early childhood education programs will really mean:

> Early childhood education programs could mean unwelcome government intrusion into the lives of families, whether they are black, brown, yellow or white. Minority parents, who may be particularly vulnerable to the trendy ideas of social engineers, must guard against the removal of their precious right to raise children as they see fit.

She concluded her remarks with the following observation:

> Until there is compelling evidence that early childhood education serves the overall public good, and until there is a consensus among citizen-taxpayers that institutionalizing young children serves the interests of an orderly society, there is no justification for spending billions of dollars on pre-kindergarten programs.

Summary Observations

After deciding to conduct a forum on educational access, the Texas Advisory Committee deliberated for a considerable time before establishing early childhood intervention programs as its principal focus. The subcommittee appointed by Chairman Canales to plan the forum determined that volumes of research have been published that demonstrate the discrepancies in educational outcomes between minority and majority students and the failures of public educational systems to meet the unique needs of minority youth. Given the

overwhelming evidence of these disparities and inequities, the subcommittee felt that the forum should focus on a more positive approach. Social science research has continued to demonstrate the critical nature of a child's formative years in development. As educational leaders have lamented the failure of delayed remedial efforts to close the gap in educational outcomes, more attention has been focused on what preventative endeavors might be undertaken to better assure equality of educational opportunity. In preliminary inquiries, Commission staff and Advisory Committee members were advised time and again that efforts to improve a child's chances of success in school need to begin at a very early stage in that child's development. Many authorities felt that parents of at-risk children need to first be reached in order for them to provide the nurturing environment and support necessary for their children to have the experiences, self-esteem, and motivation to succeed in school. Without parental support and guidance, many children would enter public education with fear, antipathy, and a sense of alienation. Their chances of success would be severely diminished.

The civil rights implications of examining this question of early childhood education were clear to the Advisory Committee. Much as the studies to determine whether affirmative action programs have assisted in overcoming

discriminatory barriers in employment, the Committee thought it appropriate to inquire about the efficacy of early childhood programs in rectifying long-standing and well-documented inequality in educational opportunities. Lacking the resources and time necessary to conduct exhaustive research and arrive at firm conclusions on the question, the Committee nonetheless felt it could make a contribution by conducting an initial inquiry and transmitting the results to the United States Commission on Civil Rights.

The May 20, 1989, forum in Dallas achieved this limited objective. This summary of the proceedings, combined with the full transcript, should be of interest and concern to the Commissioners. Much information was provided by a diverse representation of child care experts, educators, researchers, parents, and other knowledgeable individuals.

The Committee was told that problems of minorities in public schools are not diminishing. Because minority families are disproportionately represented in low-income communities, frequently have inadequate health, nutrition, and housing, suffer from unemployment and underemployment, and are victims of discrimination in employment and public services, their children often enter the public school system at an extreme disadvantage. Many also come from non-English speaking homes, compounding their difficulties.

The forum presenters provided a bleak picture of the

status of minorities in Texas public schools. The dropout rates and acheivement levels continue to emphasize disparities in educational opportunities. Teenage pregnancies, single-parent homes, lack of pre- and post-natal care and absence of motivating experiences and supportive home environments tend to reinforce the probable failure of a significant portion of minority children in our public schools. Such a condition is intolerable in terms of its consequent waste of human resources and its violation of basic civil rights protections. Corporate business executives have recently joined other public policy and civil rights leaders in condemning the absence of equal educational opportunities. A crisis has been recognized and solutions, often involving dramatic reforms, have been called for.[54]

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[54]In September 1989 President Bush convened an educational summit of all the Nation's governors in Charlottesville, Virginia. The purpose of this conference was to prepare a set of national goals for improving the performance of the educational system. An article published by Newsweek during the summit listed several areas where there is emerging consensus among educators, parents, and politicians, for necessary change. The second area listed was Early Childhood Education. According to the authors, "every expert agrees that intervention must take place early - before first grade - if poor children are to have any reasonable chance of success." The article further stated that the President endorced this concept. (Jonathan Alter with Pat Wingert and Ann McDaniel, "A Summit for Schools: Progress or Platitudes?" Newsweek, Oct. 2, 1989).

Despite the gloom, the Committee heard from educators, child development experts, and care providers about new, exciting, and innovative programs designed to help "at-risk" children succeed, and to assist their parents. The Committee learned that enthusiastic and committed persons can indeed "make a difference," in promoting educational success. Most of the presenters called for the marshalling of additional resources to provide quality early childhood programs for all at-risk children; a few felt that dollars were less of a problem than the misdirection of priorities; one or two presenters opposed the expansion of any early childhood program outside the home. All, however, agreed that the formative years of a child's development are crucial to his/her development and eventual success in fulfilling his/her potential.

Most participants affirmed that the assurance of equal educational opportunities is critical to the furtherance of civil rights progress and therefore worthy of a significant commitment of resources and energy. The superintendents and their representatives addressing the forum agreed that a judicial determination mandating equality in the funding of public schools in Texas would be helpful in achieving this goal. They contended that failure to provide equity at the starting point in the educational process would only lead to increasing disparities and inequality in the social and

economic benefits of our nation.[55]

Finally, all presenters emphasized that helping children and their families is a significant imperative in overcoming obstacles of discrimination and assuring equal educational opportunities.

The Texas Advisory Committee is convinced that civil rights progress in this State is dependent upon assuring equity in educational opportunity and that this goal is as yet unattained. The Committee believes that the United States Commission on Civil Rights should carefully review the results of this preliminary and modest inquiry. There is no absence of documentation on inequities in public education. There is,

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[55]A report released by the House Senate Committee on Children, Youth and Families concluded that despite the economic recovery of the 1980s, millions of children in the United States remain in poverty, "unhealthy, uneducated and unable to participate in the highly technological economy of the future." The report found that one-fifth of all children, 50 percent of black children, and one-fourth of all pre-school children live in poverty. Also, young children constitute the single largest poverty group in the country. The Committee research also found that family incomes of black and Hispanic children have continued to decline. Overall, the median family income of white children is more than 1 3/4 times that of Hispanic children and double that of black children. And the report revealed that the median income of children living in single-parent families declined by 19 percent between 1970 and 1987.
Representative George Miller of California, chairman of the Committee commented that these statistics portray a national tragedy which "require the mobilization of all our resources." He said that his priority would be "to continue to concentrate on whether we can launch healthy children into this world. I would concentrate on children zero through six...minor course corrections at the start of a child's life can dramatically alter the outcome and change the course these children will take." (Marlene Cimons, "High Poverty Rate Persists for Children," Los Angeles Times, Oct. 2, 1989 p. 1).

however, an insufficient emphasis on finding solutions and implementing them in order to someday create a more just and fair society. As many experts have noted, our future success as a nation may well depend on this.

UNIVERSITY
of
DALLAS

November 8, 1989

Mr. John Dulles
Western Regional Division
USCCR
3660 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 810
Los Angeles, CA 90010

Dear John:

You asked for responses from the members of the Texas Advisory Committee on the draft summary report on early childhood education.

The report is not acceptable, for the following reasons:

1. Early childhood education is not a civil rights issue. Securing the civil rights of every citizen is the basic purpose of government. Preventing discrimination by government on the grounds of race, not solving the problem of poverty and broken families, is what civil rights is all about. In his recent letter of resignation, former chairman William B. Allen rightly said: "We must disabuse ourselves of the folly that a civil rights program is a poverty program!"

The education of children is a public policy issue, not a civil rights issue, to be decided on by citizens through their elected officials. The only way education could be a civil rights issue is if government excluded children on the basis of race from schools or programs available to other members of a local community. Not one participant in our May 1989 forum even alleged any such discrimination. Yet the draft report assumes that the absence of more government funding in early childhood education programs is somehow a denial of civil rights.

2. The participants invited to the May forum were, with one exception, biased. Thirteen of the fourteen speakers covered in the report receive part or all of their income from existing government programs. I do not doubt the sincerity of these speakers. Still, they are naturally going to be inclined to views that will bring more money into their pockets or that will increase their power as administrators.

When we discussed the forum at our 1988 advisory committee meetings, I specifically warned the staff against inviting too many administrators paid by government. Yet 93% of our participants were such administrators. Not one private citizen, a mother or father with children of their own, was asked to give his view on the issue. No one who is purely a classroom teacher spoke as part of the formal program.

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If we were conducting a forum to investigate whether smoking causes lung cancer, would our invited speakers be limited to officials on the payroll of Philip Morris and R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company?

3. The editorializing at the beginning and end of the report is a product of USCCR staff, not the Texas Advisory Committee. Committee members did nothing more than sit there at the forum and listen to the parade of biased witnesses. We never discussed among ourselves what we thought of it. It is inappropriate for USCCR staff to present as Committee views what we never had an opportunity to deliberate on.

I propose that you drop from the report the "Introduction and Background" and "Summary Observations." In their place, a very brief remark should explain that the Committee has been unable to meet to discuss the implications of the Forum. This remark shoud also mention the inherent bias in a forum of this kind, where most of the speakers were part of an "early childhood establishment" that receives its pay from government and is therefore likely to be biased in favor of increased government spending on these programs.

If you are not prepared to do this, I propose that you include this letter, reprinted in its entirety, as an appendix to the report.

Yours truly,

Thomas G. West

Thomas G. West
Member, Texas Advisory Committee

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COMMISSION ON
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January 15, 1990

FROM: WRD/Philip Montez

SUBJ: Concerns on Letter of Tom West

TO: Melvin Jenkins
Staff Director
Office of the Staff Director

On October 17, 1989, the WRD mailed a copy of the draft report, Early Education Issues in Texas: Implications for Civil Rights to all Texas SAC members for review, comment and approval. The document was a summary report based on a community forum held in Dallas on May 20, 1989.

With the exception of one letter of dissent from Thomas West, all comments regarding the draft were favorable. The report was approved 9-1 by the SAC (there is one vacancy on the Committee).

The original proposal to conduct this forum was approved by the Texas SAC, 10-1 in December 1988. The only dissent was by Tom West. The Acting Staff Director approved the proposal on January 18, 1989, and requested that all SAC members be invited to recommend participants for the forum. A special planning meeting of the Texas education subcommittee was convened in February, 1989 in order to allow full discussion and involvement of SAC members in preparations for the forum. All Texas SAC members were invited. At this meeting, Tom West's concerns were discussed in great detail by the members present. Plans were made to proceed with the forum.

Staff encouraged SAC members to recommend forum participants and several did so. Mr. West recommended the following:

Colleen Parro, Dallas, Texas, concerned mother
Kent Grusendorf, Arlington, Texas, Texas House of Representatives
Kate Walsh O'Beirne, Washington, D.C., Heritage Foundation
Ronald Haskins, Washington, D.C., House Ways & Means Committee staff

WRD invited each of the above with personal telephone calls. With the exception of Ms. Parro, all declined. Ms. Parro decided that she would appear as a representative for Eagle Forum.

The forum was convened on May 20, 1989. Commissioners Esther Buckley and Sherwin T. S. Chan attended and addressed the proceedings. SAC members present at the forum included Adolph Canales, chair; Denzer Burke, subcommittee chair, Jose Garcia De Lara, Lino Graglia, Lynn Lipshy, Manuel Pacheco, Milton Tobian, and Thomas West. All took an active part in the dialogue with forum presentors.

Following the forum, a transcript was obtained and sent to all SAC members for their review. Comments were solicited by July 31, 1989. None were received. Staff proceeded to draft the summary report which was mailed on October 17, 1989. Following receipt of Mr. West's November 8, 1989 letter, WRD sent copies to all SAC members, requesting their response on his request that the letter be placed in the appendix of the report. Of those responding, only one additional SAC member supported this proposal. Several members were vehement in opposition to this. One member reserved the right to introduce his own letter as an appendix in the event that Mr. West's letter was published. Based on the SAC response, the draft report was submitted to headquarters on November 29, 1989 without the West letter.

The Texas SAC has consistently considered all points of view. The education project proposal was endorsed by all except one member. The draft report has also been similarly endorsed.

The Advisory Committee has followed all established procedures throughout this project which allowed for full input by all members. In every case, the majority decision has been implemented.

We trust this responds to your concerns.

PHILIP MONTEZ
Regional Director
Western Regional Division